

Shaunda Y. Rauch
Planner/Public Information Officer
Monongalia County Office of Emergency Management
74 Vandervort Drive
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 598-0301
(304) 598-5659
srauch@mecca911.org

PRESS RELEASE

To: Local Media Outlets

From: Shaunda Y. Rauch
Planner/PIO
srauch@mecca911.org or 598-0301

RE: **Ernesto is Coming ... *Are You Ready for a Flood?***

Date: August 31, 2006

Emergency Management personnel are continuing to monitor Tropical Storm Ernesto as it moves into Florida. "We have been in contact with the National Weather Service and the current predictions are that we could see as much as 3-5 inches of rain on Friday" said Jimmy Gianato, Director of the WV Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. The emergency response community is taking the threat seriously ... Emergency Operations Plans [EOP] and resources lists are being reviewed and coordination with key agencies such as the Health Department are being undertaken. "But even with all our efforts, YOU are the most qualified person to prepare yourself and your family for the next disaster to hit Monongalia County" said Shaunda Rauch, Public Information Officer for the Monongalia County Office of Emergency Management. **Here's what you can do to prepare yourself:**

Know what to expect

- Prolonged, intense rainfall can cause a river or stream to overflow and flood the surrounding area. The rule for being safe is simple: head for the high ground and stay away from the water. Even a shallow depth of fast-moving flood water produces more force than most people imagine. The most dangerous thing you can do is to try walking, swimming, or driving through such swift water.

- Know your area's flood risk—if unsure, call the Monongalia County Office of Emergency Management at 598-0301 or visit our website at www.moncooem.org.
- Listen to local radio or television stations for more information.

Prepare a Family Disaster Plan

- The Monongalia County Office of Emergency Management and Health Department has teamed up to produce the ***Family Disaster Plan: A Step By Step Guide***. This handbook can help you and your family prepare for an emergency. Emergencies can include severe storms, natural disasters, and utility outages – even terrorist attacks. “Knowing you’re prepared for an emergency can help you and your family stay calm and act effectively. Be aware ... be prepared and have a plan!” said Rauch.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit containing—

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person [1 gallon per person per day].
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)
- Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.

Insurance

- Most homeowner's policies do not cover flooding damages. Check to see if you have insurance that covers flooding. Flood insurance may be a wise investment for you to consider. The Monongalia County Planning Commission can assist you with obtaining more information about the National Flood Insurance Program. Please call 291-9570.

What to do when the National Weather Service issues a Watch or Warning

WATCH	WARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flood WATCH means a flood is possible in your area. • A flash flood WATCH means flash flooding is possible in your area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flood WARNING means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area. • A flash flood WARNING means a flash flood is occurring or will occur <i>very</i> soon.
<p>When a FLOOD WATCH is issued—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home. • Fill your car's gas tank, in case an evacuation notice is issued. 	<p>When a FLOOD WARNING is issued—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to local radio and TV stations for information and advice. If told to evacuate, do so as soon as possible.
<p>When a FLASH FLOOD WATCH is issued—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice. 	<p>When a FLASH FLOOD WARNING is issued—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Or if you think it has already started, evacuate immediately. You may have only seconds to escape. Act quickly! • Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks, and storm drains. Do not drive around barricades . . . they are there for your safety. • If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

For more information on preparedness efforts you can undertake, please contact the Monongalia County Office of Emergency Management at 598-0301 or visit our website at www.moncooem.org.

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